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The Triumphant Gospel IN Japan

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CHRISTIANITY in the Japanese Empire is a triumphant force. The gospel is winning the day. Jesus Christ is marching in triumph across the land and is gripping the hearts and transforming the lives of the people everywhere.

Under Two Dynasties

In 1868 the Japanese Emperor learning that Christianity was knocking at the doors of the Empire issued two edicts. Translated into English they read as follows:

"As long as the sun shall continue to warm the earth let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan. And let all know that if the Christian's God himself shall violate this command He shall pay for it with His head."

"The wicked sect called Christian is strictly prohibited. All persons suspected of being Christians are to be reported to the officials and rewards will be given."

There is no uncertain sound about these edicts. They clearly indicate the attitude of the government of that time toward Christianity.

Two years ago the present Emperor of Japan learned that a Christian hospital in the city of Tokyo was overcrowded and that the management wished to enlarge the building and extend the work. Did he follow in the footsteps of his father forty-five years ago? No, he went down deep into his own pocket and brought forth 50,000 yen ($25,000). This he sent to the superintendent of that Christian institution to help provide for enlargement and extension. During his coronation he graciously gave a gift of ten thousand yen to the Christian Leper Asylum located at Kumamoto. He has also acknowledged his appreciation of the work that the Salvation Army is doing in Japan by a gift of six thousand yen.

These actions speak louder than words. They voice a changed attitude that is most remarkable.

A Memorable Meeting

For fifty years the outstanding leaders of Japan were swept along on an ever rising tide of agnostic and religionless tendencies. Religion was banished from their thinking. Then came scandals in the Imperial navy. Men in high places were found with hands grimy with graft. Up and down the land the wreckage of character was appalling. These things shocked many of the thoughtful leaders into a great awakening.

In 1913 two hundred of Japan's leaders became so concerned that they gathered in the city of Tokyo to consider the situation and see what could and ought to be done. At that meeting Baron Sakatani, ex-Minister of Finance, and one of Japan's outstanding statesmen, arose and said: "As a nation we are face to face with a great social and moral crisis. The situation calls for great frankness. Let us lay bare our hearts. If we have confessions to make let us make them. And I will make one myself. As a child in the home I was taught to despise Buddhism and to fear Christianity. As a youth in the schools and the university we were taught to look with scorn upon religion of every character. As men, come to maturity, and engaged in Empire building here in the Orient, it has been the passion and purpose of our hearts that Japan should stand down through the years as an everlasting evidence of the fact that a nation can become great and do great things without religion. But we must acknowledge the fact that today a spirit of conviction is sweeping over the government and the thoughtful leaders of the nation that we have misinterpreted human nature and misunderstood the human heart. We need religion. The nation needs God. The people need the dynamic behind religion. Nothing is more evident than the fact that we are surrendering our past position and yielding to the contentions of the religionists."

Baron Sakatani is one to whom when he stands to speak, the nation stops to listen, and that utterance made a profound im-

pression. It has echoed and re-echoed up and down the Empire and done much to turn the tide. Today religion looms large in the life of the nation.

A Unique Organization

One hundred and ten outstanding leaders, impelled by the conviction that they ought to stress the spiritual in the development of the life of the nation, have banded themselves into an organization for the purpose of studying the great moral and social and religious questions of the day. For two years these men — leaders in the educational and political and industrial life of the Empire — have been gathering once a month in the city of Tokyo, and sitting together five hours at a sitting, they have studied morals and religion. The president of this organization is Baron Shibuzawa, the J. Pierpont Morgan of Japan. He is one of the wealthiest men in Japan and the most outstanding character in the industrial life of the nation. Baron Sakatani, ex-Minister of Finance, is an enthusiastic member. Baron Kikuchi, ex-Minister of Education is a member. President Takata of Waseda University, who has just been made Minister of Education, is also a member. Men of this type — every man a leader bearing large responsibilities in the national life, constitute the membership of the organization. In fact there are indications that today nothing bulks so large in the thinking of many of Japan's leaders as does religion.

In their study Christianity has had its proper place. It is my privilege to sit with these men, and again and again they have gathered around the mighty personality of Jesus Christ and with open hearts and minds they have looked into the face of the Christ, sincerely seeking to know his message for their nation.

The significant thing is not that these men have become Christians, for that decision must still be reached by most of them. The significant thing about this movement is that for the first time in the history of the Japanese nation its leaders have become willing to open the Book of books and read the things written upon its pages. It is the first time that the leaders of Japan have in any large numbers been willing to give Jesus Christ and his gospel a chance upon their hearts and consciences.

When a people come to this point the future is pregnant with promise.

Mr. Morimura, one of Japan's millionaires, studied the New Testament for years. Eight months ago he decided that he and his wealth and his influence ought to be lined up on the side of Christ, and he came out publicly for the Master. To him the call to salvation meant a call to service. And in the evangelistic campaign which has been sweeping across Japan, as a layman he has been going up and down the land giving to his own people messages that have flamed and flashed with the fire of the Spirit of God.

Count Okuma on War and Christianity

In the spring of 1913 Count Okuma, the present Premier of Japan, invited some six missionaries, about fifteen Japanese pastors, and three distinguished Americans who were visiting Japan at the time — Drs. John R. Mott, Hamilton Mabie and Professor Peabody of Harvard University — to meet him at his palatial residence. The burden of his message was in general as follows:

"I believe in the work that you men are doing. I believe that our people need the gospel which you are giving to them. Now, how can questions of the character that have arisen between California and Japan be solved? Personally I am profoundly convinced that questions of this kind can never be solved by law, nor by politics, nor by diplomacy. And as for war, *it is unthinkable that America and Japan will ever resort to arms in an effort to find a solution for any of the questions that come up between them.* It is only when the American people on the one hand and the Japanese people on the other hand come to believe what the gospel teaches in regard to man's true relation to his fellowmen that questions of this character will be peaceably and permanently solved. It is only when these two peoples believe what Christ taught in regard to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man that they will be able to extend hands across the Pacific and work together for all that is good and great and noble. The only force that can solve such questions is Christianity."

That is the abounding faith of Count Okuma — the Grand Old Man of the Japanese Empire. It is also his conviction as to the impossibility of a war between America and Japan. When Americans are listening to the rantings of the yellow journals, and the yellow politicians, and the yellow lecturers in regard to the inevitable war that is coming between these two nations, let them call to mind this utterance of Japan's most distinguished and most influential statesman.

A Significant Movement

In 1914 the Christian forces of Japan, seeing that the situation spelled opportunity, launched a nation-wide evangelistic campaign. *This is the first time in Christian history that the entire Christian hosts of a nation joined together as one solid phalanx in a national evangelistic effort.*

This campaign had its inception in the heart and brain of a Japanese pastor. The leadership of the campaign has been very largely in the hands of the Japanese Christian leaders. The results have gone far beyond the hopes of the most sanguine. In Yokohama 4,000 people crowded into the great hall the opening night and 100 decided to follow Jesus Christ. In Tokyo as a result of two different campaigns 5,500 of her two and a half million people broke with the past and accepted Christianity as their religion. In Osaka, the industrial center of Japan, in a two-weeks' campaign 2,000 men and women were turned to the Christ. North and South, East and West bring the same glad story. In the island of Kyushu, the most conservative section of the Empire, as a result of a two weeks' effort 960 men and women turned from their idols and temples and became worshipers of the living God.

This campaign is sweeping across Japan with the song of conquest everywhere it goes. Half a century of seed-sowing is coming to fruitage and the harvest time has come. The campaign is to continue for three years and will witness in Japan some of the greatest Christian victories that have been witnessed in any land or age.

The Christian Community

The impact of the gospel upon Japan has raised up a magnificent company of faithful Christians. In the pulpit and in

the pew of the church of Christ in Japan are men and women who in character and in scholarship, in faith and in influence, are the peers of the best men and women in America.

In the pulpit we find such men as Dr. Chiba, our own Baptist leader; Pastor Miyagawa, the Beecher of Japan; Pastor Uemura, the Russell Conwell of Japan; Pastor Evina, one of Japan's most popular orators; Colonel Yomomura, the Japanese General Booth; Bishop Hiraiwa, Mr. Uchimura, President Harada, and a score of others. In the Christian pew we find the educators, Dr. Nitobe and President Sato of the Imperial University of the North; the jurist, Supreme Justice Watanabe; the gentleman and scholar, Hon. Ebara, member of the House of Peers; the legislator, Mr. Shimada, the orator par-excellence of Parliament; the Christian warrior, Admiral Uriyu; the Christian reformers, Messrs. Ando and Nemoto, both members of Parliament, and many others.

These are men who are blazing paths of glory for their Lord throughout the Sunrise Kingdom.

The Baptist Contribution

The Baptists are endeavoring to do their share toward the evangelization of this fair land. Among the islands of the Inland Sea the Gospel Ship is doing a work that is unique and cannot be paralleled anywhere in the Orient. At Waseda University the Baptists have been given a free hand to give the gospel to the ten thousand students of that institution. The Tokyo (Misaki) Tabernacle, located in the heart of the city, is endeavoring with a fourteen-hour-a-day seven-days-in-the-week program to meet the opportunities of its strategic location. Duncan Academy devotes itself to the task of educating and developing Christian character among the young men committed to its care. In the Japan Baptist Theological Seminary — an institution in which Northern and Southern Baptists are united — are trained our future Christian leaders. Four girls' schools are engaged in educating and giving Christian training to the young women of the Empire. A Kindergarten Training School and a Women's Bible Training School are training specialists for work among women and children. In the

strategic centers of the nation, Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Himeji, Mito, Sendai and Morioka and the surrounding country, missionaries and Japanese pastors and evangelists are engaging in various forms of Christian service.

A Challenge

The impact of the gospel upon Japan has led multitudes of the people to break with their past religious ideas and ideals. With their backs to the idols and temples and with their faces toward the sunrise they stand with their hearts and minds open to the light, "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Hungry-hearted and conscious of a great famine in their souls they are casting about for a haven in which to anchor their faith.

The 500,000 students of the Empire almost to a man have broken with the old creeds and stand hesitating between Christ and agnosticism. The pupils in the primary and secondary schools of the Empire six million strong will also soon be ready for a new order. In 1915 there were 115,000 Christians among Japan's sixty million people. To give the gospel to this unevangelized host there was one missionary to every 46,000 and one Japanese worker to every 38,000. Of temples and shrines there were 495,000. Of churches and preaching places there were only 1,860.

In the Orient Japan stands in the position of leadership. That leadership she is making potent and powerful. As goes Japan so in a large measure goes the Orient. Japan for Christ means the Orient for Christ. Japan against Christ means the Orient with its teeming millions with their backs to the Christ. The challenge that comes ringing across eight thousand miles of sea and land is that the church in America shall do everything possible to win this land for Christ. How are we going to answer this challenge?

Tokyo, Japan *(Reprinted from Missions)*

FOR additional literature or other information regarding the work of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, write to any of the following:

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2. **Department of Missionary Education 23 East 26th Street, New York City.**
3. **Literature Department, Box 41, Boston, Mass.**

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